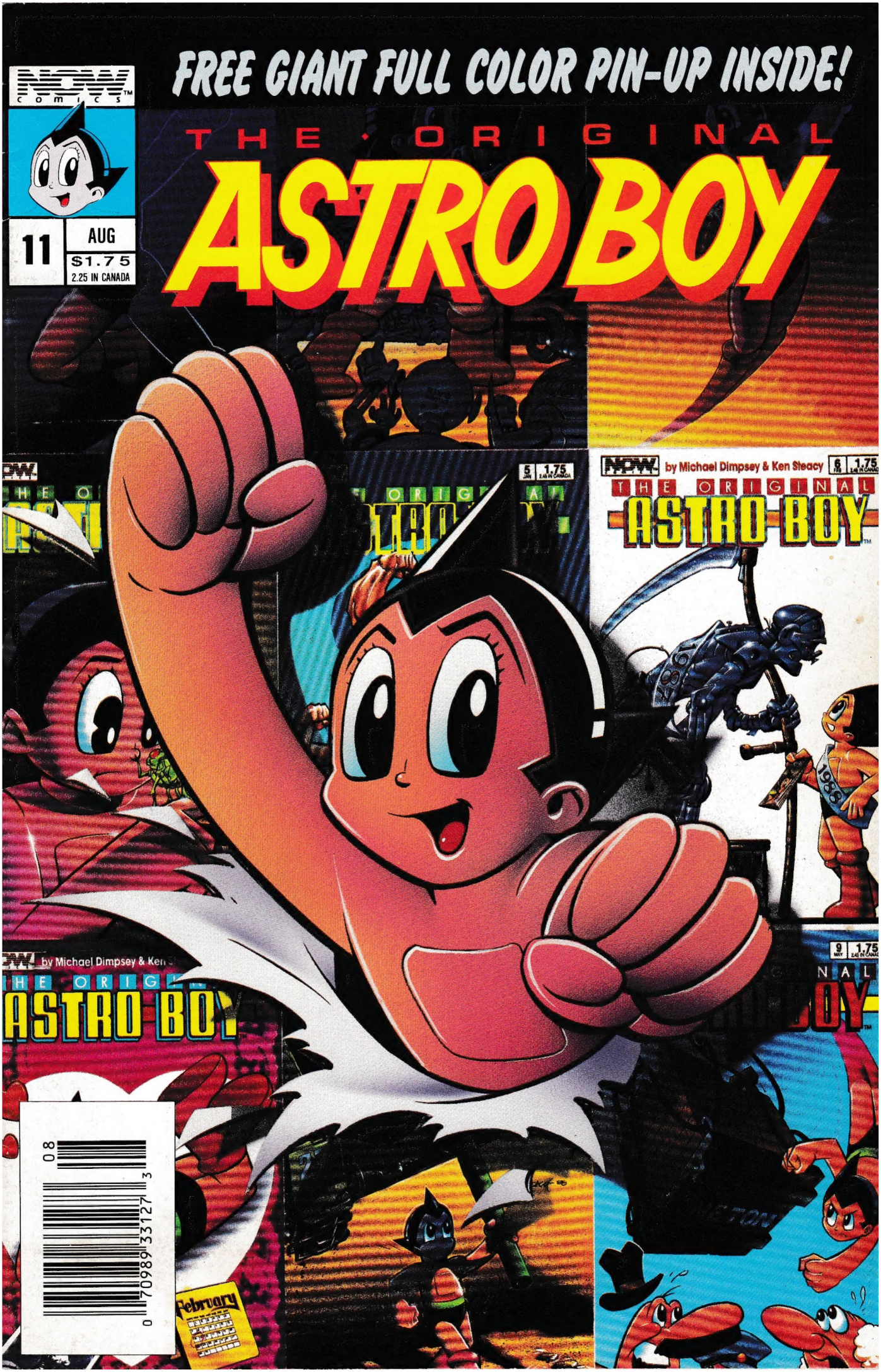

NOW COMICS
11
AUG
$1.75
2.25 IN CANADA
FREE GIANT FULL COLOR PIN-UP INSIDE!
THE ORIGINAL
ASTRO BOY
by Michael Dimpsey & Ken Steacy
THE ORIGINAL
ASTRO BOY
February

I'M SO CONFUSED... YOU'RE *REALLY* MY NEW MOM AND DAD ?!
THAT'S RIGHT, SON.
AND YOU'RE *ROBOTS*, JUST LIKE ME ?
YES, DEAR.
BUT YOU LOOK JUST LIKE THOSE TWO RESEARCHERS--
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING IN TIME, ASTRO— BUT NOW, YOU'D BETTER GET READY FOR SCHOOL.
SCHOOL ?! THE ONE JUST AROUND THE CORNER ? WITH ALL THE *OTHER* BOYS AND GIRLS ?!
OF COURSE ! HERE'S YOUR BAG— BETTER HURRY!
WOW! THIS IS REALLY *GREAT!* I'M GONNA GO TO--

ASIMOV·ELEMENTARY·SCHOOL
RECALL ALL ROBOTS!
NO 'BOTS!
ROBOT-FREE ZONE!
NUTS to 'BOTS!
VOTE NO
SCHOOL?!

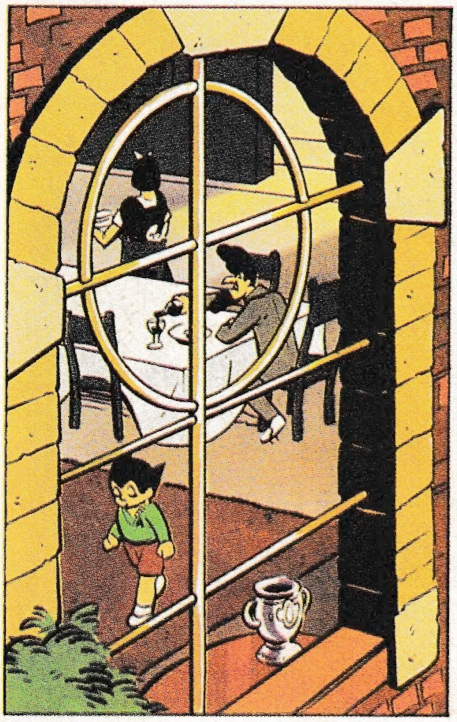
WHAT'S GOING ON ?
PLAYING DUMB AS USUAL, HUH ? I KNEW I SHOULDA TAKEN A WRENCH TO YOU WHEN I HAD THE CHANCE – LOOKIT ALL THE TROUBLE YOU'VE CAUSED !!
BUT HAVE'T THESE PEOPLE HEARD THE PROCLAMATION ? I THOUGHT EVERYONE KNEW THAT WE'LL ALL BE LIVING IN HARMONY AND EQUALITY !
YEAH, RIGHT ! WERE YOU BUILT YESTERDAY OR WHAT ? A PIECE OF PAPER AND A FANCY SPEECH CAN'T CHANGE THINGS OVERNIGHT YOU KNOW !!
THIS IS INTOLERABLE ! THIS LITTLE 'BOT HAS EVERY RIGHT TO ATTEND MY CLASSES ! YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF YOURSELVES !
BUT MR. POMPUS, WHAT IF HE SHORTS OUT AND BLOWS UP OR SOMETHING ?!
PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE – ASTRO IS THE MOST ADVANCED TYPE IN EXISTANCE !
YEAH, WE'VE HEARD THAT SONG BEFORE !

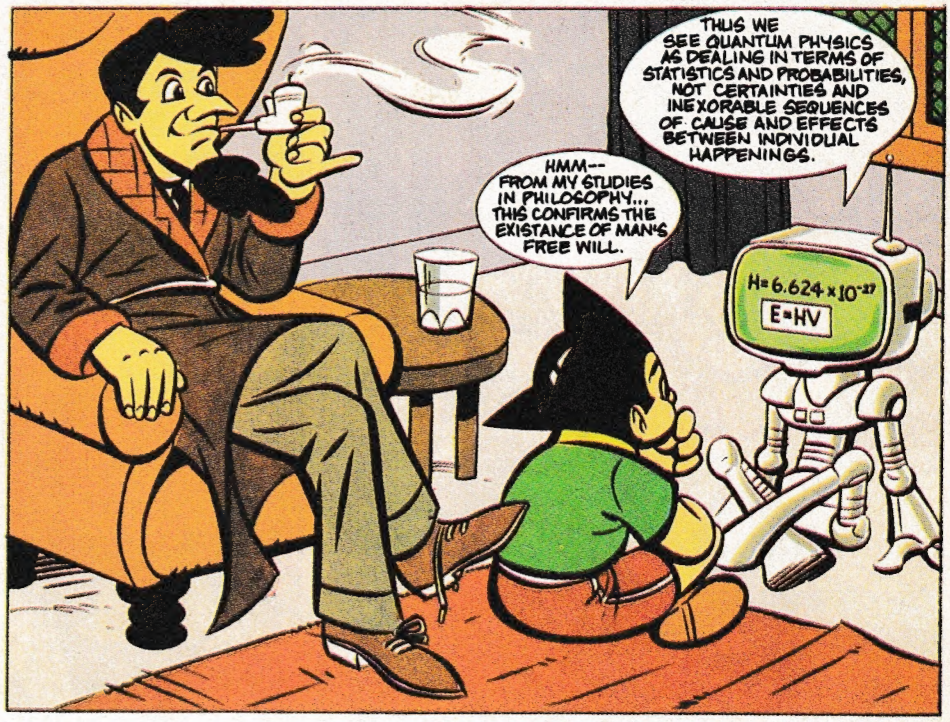
LISTEN, INSPECTOR FLATFOOT—
WHATEVER— THESE ROBOTS BUILT THIS SOCIETY. THEY'VE BEEN INTELLIGENT, SENSITIVE BEINGS FOR YEARS NOW, AND ALL WE'VE DONE IS TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEM, TREAT THEM—
—LIKE SLAVES.
THAT'S GUMSHOE!
ASTRO, ARE YOU SUPRISED BY THE RESENTMENT PEOPLE HAVE FOR YOUR PRESENCE HERE TODAY—?
YES I AM— BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF COMPASSION AND UNDERSTANDING I SEE. ROBOTS WERE ONCE COLD AND IMPERSONAL BUT WERE GIVEN FEELINGS—NOW IT SEEMS HUMANS HAVE BECOME LIKE WE ROBOTS ONCE WERE...
WELL PUT YOUNG MAN— THERE'S A SAD IRONY HERE.
I'VE BEEN THROUGH AN AWFUL LOT TO BE HERE TODAY— IF I HAD A HEART I THINK IT WOULD BE BREAKING...
ASTRO, COULD YOU PLEASE ELABORATE A BIT FOR OUR VIEWERS?
WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

WELL, LET'S SEE... I GUESS MY *EARLIEST* MEMORY IS OF WAKING UP IN *DR. BOYNTON'S* LAB. HE SAID I WAS HIS SON, AND CALLED ME "*ASTOR BOYNTON*".

THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED WERE FULL OF WONDER AS I LEARNED *EVERYTHING* I COULD ABOUT THE WORLD.

STRANGELY, THOUGH, HE DIDN'T WANT ME TO LEAVE THE MANSION.

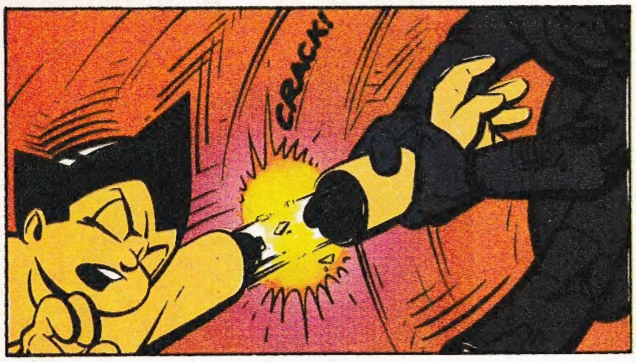




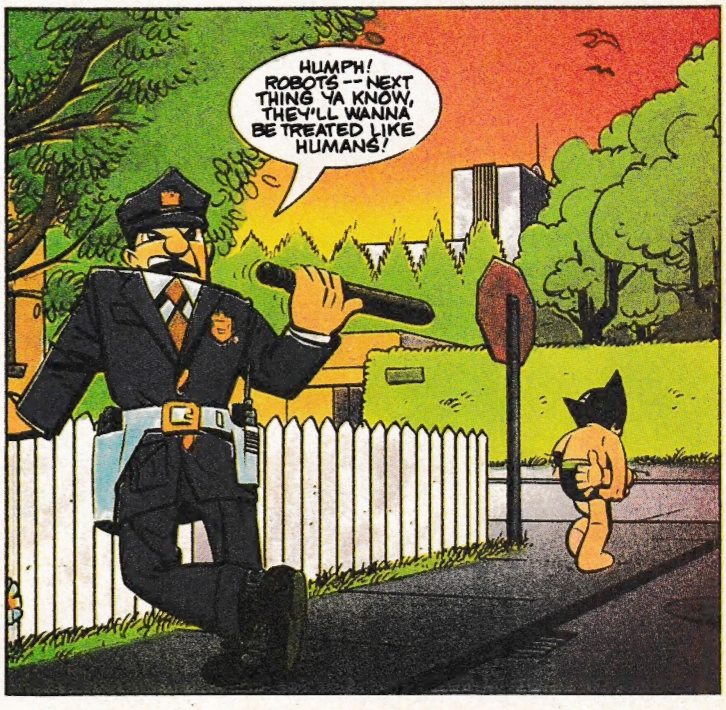
HE SEEMED HAPPY, UNTIL HE FINALLY REALIZED THAT I WOULD NEVER "GROW UP".

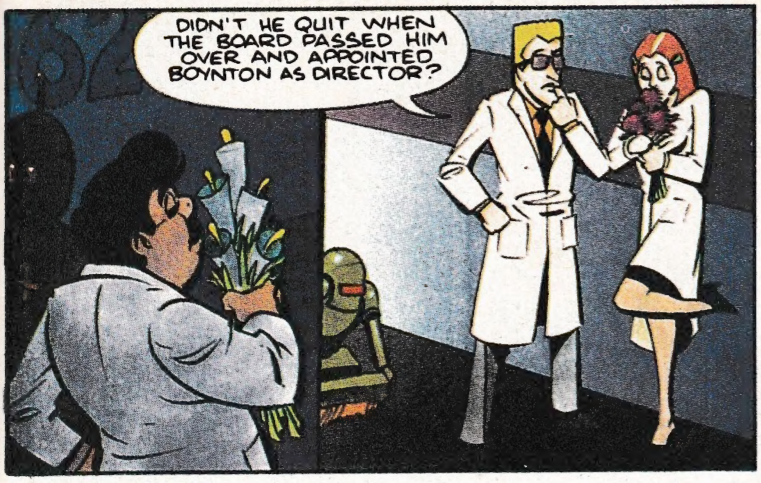
HE BANISHED ME TO THE BASEMENT WHERE I DISCOVERED THE REMAINS OF ONE OF HIS EARLIER *EXPERIMENTS*.

THOUGH BADLY DAMAGED I MANAGED TO REACTIVATE HIM, AND I THOUGHT WE COULD BE FRIENDS.

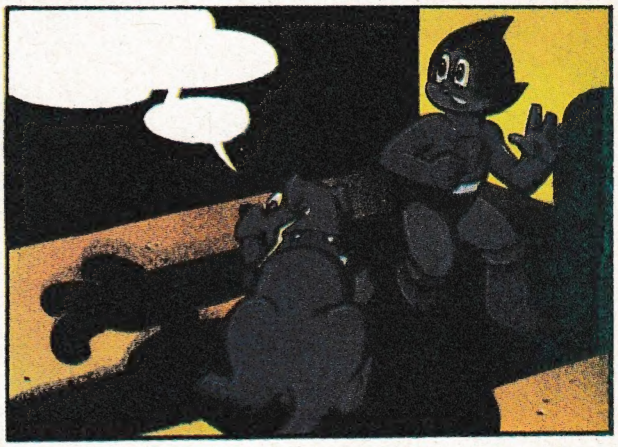


SADLY, WE ENDED UP FIGHTING AND I LOST AN ARM! HE OVERHEATED FROM THE EXERTION AND BLEW UP... AND A STERN POLICE OFFICER MADE ME REALIZE THAT I WAS *NOT* HUMAN...

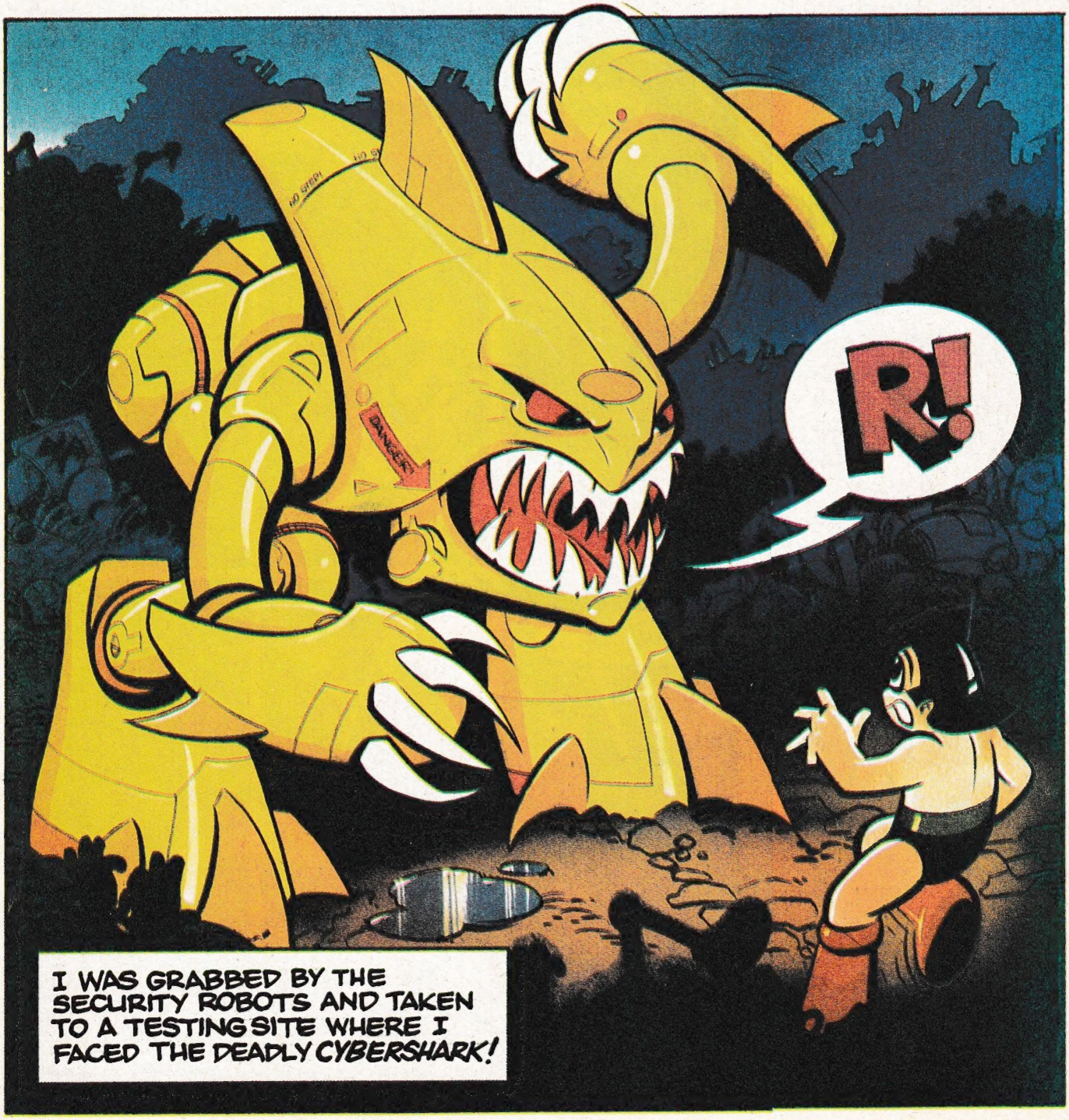




DR. BOYNTON WAS THE DIRECTOR OF THE *INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE* AND HE TOOK ME THERE FOR AN UNKNOWN REASON...



I SLIPPED AWAY AND ENCOUNTERED SOME OF THE OTHER RESEARCHERS— *ELMER*, *LANCE* AND *REBECCA* — AND I MET A TALKING DOG NAMED *SPUD*!



FORTUNATELY I DISCOVERED I HAD SOME *FORMIDABLE* POWERS OF MY OWN... AND MADE SHORT WORK OF THAT BIG BRUTE!

BZZZT! BZZZT! BZZZT!

FATHER!

DR. BOYNTON TRIED TO *DEACTIVATE* ME BUT I FOOLED HIM INTO THINKING IT WORKED AND *ESCAPED!*

RELAX. IT'LL ALL BE OVER BEFORE-

click!

BACK AT THE INSTITUTE A POWER STRUGGLE OVER DIRECTORSHIP WAS DEVELOPING BETWEEN PROFESSORS *TAS TAMIL* AND *I.Q. PLENTY*...

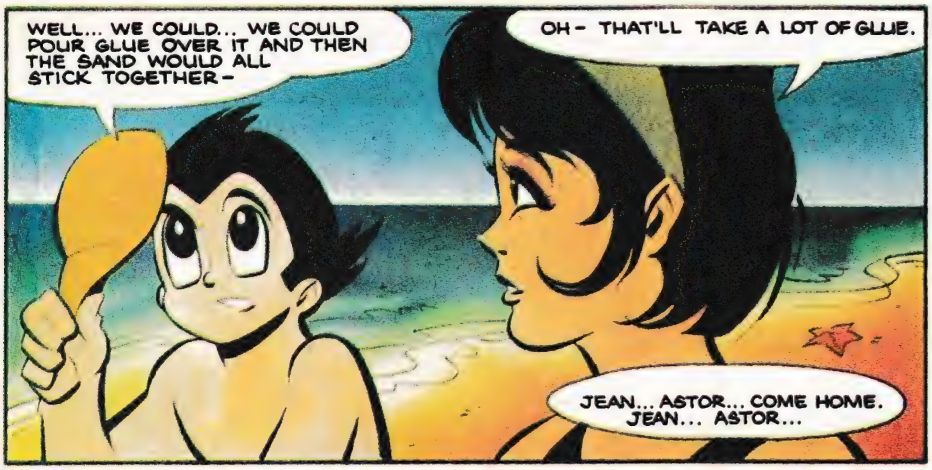
TWENTY YEARS AGO THE INSTITUTE DIVIDED THE NATION OVER OUR DEVELOPMENT OF CYBOTICS... NOW A MUCH DARKER CLOUD THREATENS ALL THAT WE'VE BUILT...

I FEEL I'M MOST QUALIFIED- UH?

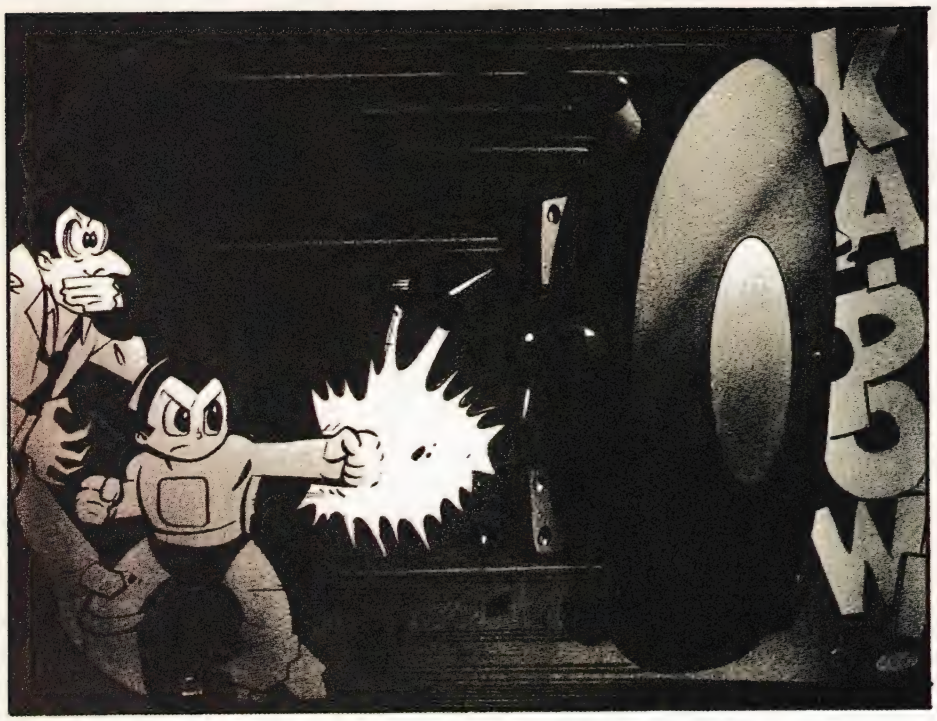
YOU COULDN'T HAVE MADE A BETTER CHOICE, TAMIL! WHEN DO I START!!

RADAR READS UNIDENTIFIED OBJECT IN FIFTH QUADRANT. ESTIMATE SPEED AT OVER MACH-
THE MILITARY HAD BEEN CALLED OUT TO RECAPTURE ME AND, THOUGH I DIDN'T WANT TO FIGHT, I HAD NO CHOICE!
SKREEEEE!
POP!
NEVERMIND
THE BATTLE WAS FIERCE AND RAGED ON IN THE AIR AND ON LAND -- LUCKILY, NO ONE WAS BADLY HURT!

I FOUND DOCTOR BOYNTON BACK AT THE MANSION AND ASKED HIM *WHO* I REALLY WAS— *WHAT* I REALLY WAS. HE SHOWED ME HOLOTAPES OF HIS LATE WIFE AND SON TO WHOM I BEAR A STRIKING RESEMBLANCE!!



THE *PUZZLE* WAS STARTING TO BE-COME *CLEAR*...



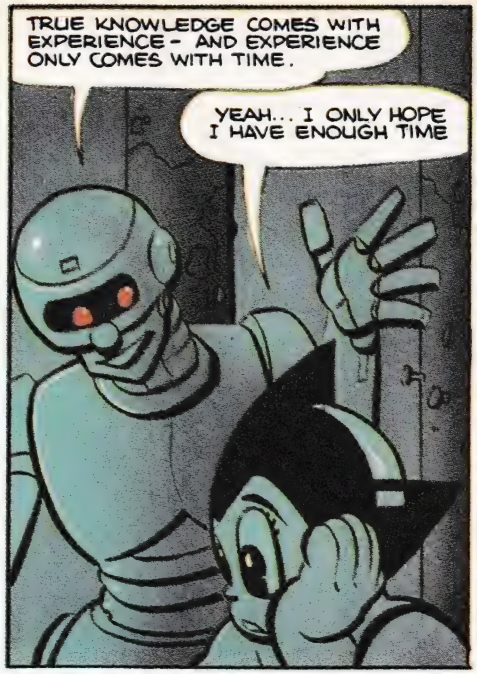
I REALIZED I NEEDED MORE INFORMATION AND BROKE INTO THE *ARIES COMPU-IX* SUPERCOMPUTER. I TRANSFERED THE *ENTIRE* DATA PACKAGE INTO MY MEMORY BANKS BUT I WAS STILL VERY *NAIVE*...

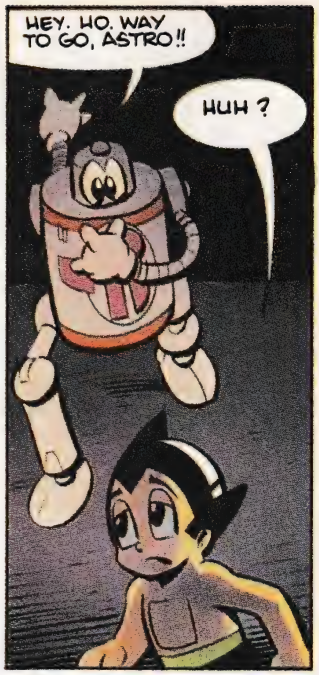
DR. BOYNTON OVERPOWERED ME AND IMPLANTED A HORRIBLE CONTROLROB NAMED *BRUNO* IN MY CIRCUITRY -- BRUNO WAS ACTIVATED BY A SMALL REMOTE AND CALISED ME GREAT *PAIN*...

THEN HE *SOLD* ME TO AN OWNER OF A ROBOCIRCUS NAMED *CACCIATORE*...

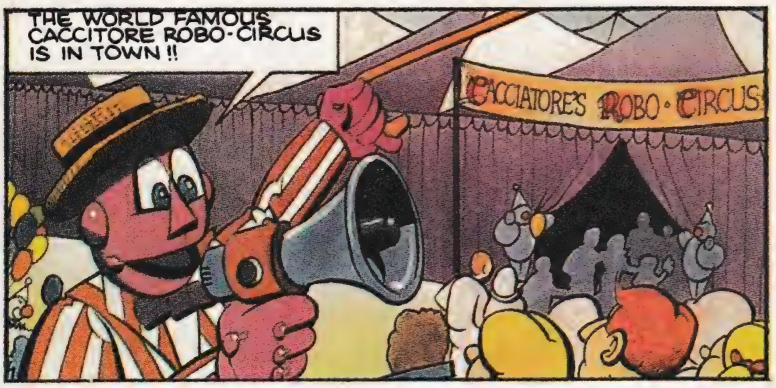
AT THE CIRCUS I MET OTHER UNFORTUNATE ROBOTS WHO HAD BEEN CAST ASIDE BY THEIR OWNERS. ONE OF THEM, *SIMON*, BECAME MY MENTOR, AND ANOTHER, *BOB THE BATTLING BATTERY*, KEPT MY SPIRITS UP...

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE INSTITUTE, I.Q. PLENTY HAD UNLEASHED A DISGUSTING *SLIME MONSTER* - WHICH FORTUNATELY DR. BOYNTON WAS ABLE TO *SUBDUE* BEFORE IT CAUSED TOO MUCH TROUBLE!



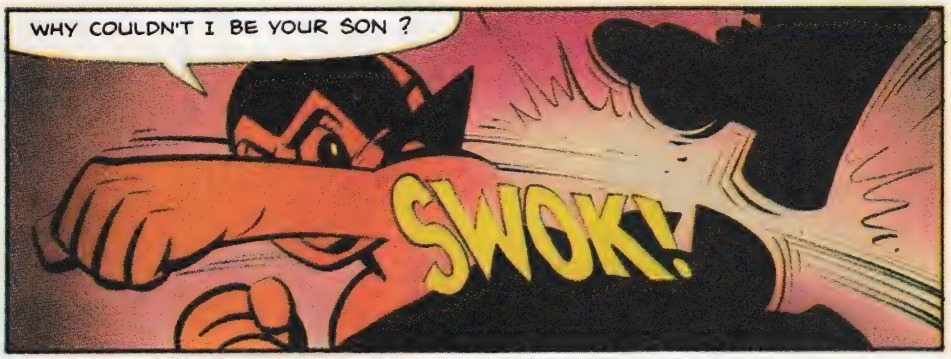


AT THE ROBOCIRCUS I HAD TO *FIGHT* FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT OF PEOPLE NOT UNLIKE YOURSELVES. I *REFUSED*, AS GRATUITOUS VIOLENCE IS ABHORENT TO MY NATURE, BUT CACCIATORE ACTIVATED BRUNO AND IN A DREAM-LIKE STUPOR . . .



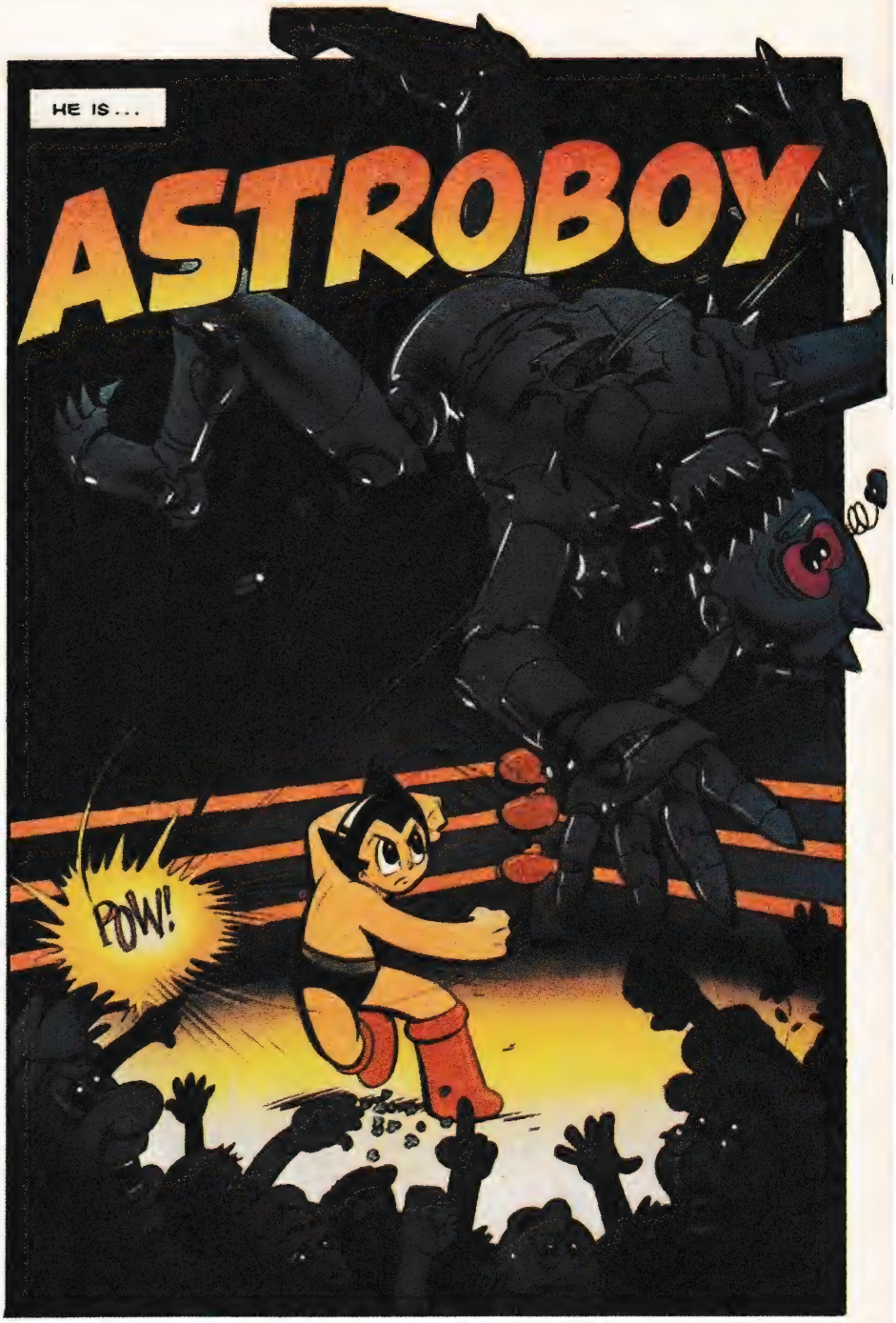
. . . I IMAGINED MY OPPONENT TO BE THE DEVIOUS *DR. BOYNTON!* I FOUGHT *FURIOUSLY* — FINALLY TOPPLING MY FOE AND INADVERTENTLY BECOMING *STAR* OF THE CIRCUS!

THERE WAS DIRTY WORK AFOOT BACK AT THE INSTITUTE AS *TAMIL* AND *GEN. HAWKINS* — WHO I LEARNED FUNDED MY DEVELOPMENT — SCHEMED TO GET ME BACK!

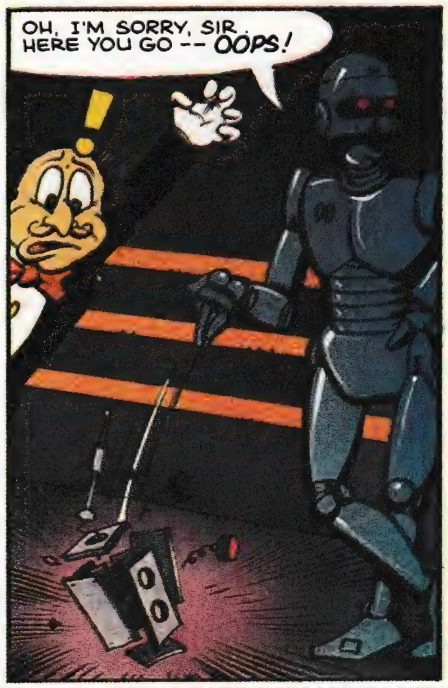


I SUPPOSE I *RESIGNED* MYSELF TO MY FATE AT THAT POINT — IN A WAY I *LIKED* BEING THE CENTRE OF ATTENTION, BUT STILL FELT VERY LOST. IT WAS MY HOME NOW. ONE NIGHT, DURING A MATCH, *DR. ELEFUN* ENTERED MY LIFE, LOUDLY PROTESTING THE BRUTALITY OF THE 'BOT BOUTS.

HE WAS ROUGHLY ESCORTED OUT AND IN THE CONFUSION SIMON *SNATCHED* --



--THE REMOTE FROM MY TORMENTOR AND *DESTROYED* IT! WE LEFT THE CIRCUS AS *FREE ROBOTS!*



STORY CONTINUES AFTER CENTERSPREAD POSTER!

WELL, *ALMOST* -- SIMON EXPLAINED TO ME HOW ROBOTS, ONCE SIMPLY *MENIALS*, HAD BEEN GIVEN REAL *INTELLIGENCE* AND *EMOTIONS* -- AND THAT'S WHEN OUR STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY REALLY BEGAN...

I HAD TO BE *FREE* OF BRUNO, SO SIMON ENLISTED A TINY 'BOT (WITH A HUGE PERSONALITY); *BUGSY!*

HE MANAGED TO LURE BRUNO OUT OF MY CIRCUITRY, BUT WHEN SIMON *GRABBED* HIM, BRUNO *EXPLODED* AND SIMON, MY BEST FRIEND, WAS REDUCED TO *SCRAP* -- !

SOON AFTER, THE OTHER ROBOTS *REVOLTED* AND SET FIRE TO THE CIRCUS WHICH HAD BEEN THEIR PRISON FOR SO LONG. CACCIATORE RAN BACK INTO THE FLAMES TO TRY AND SAVE IT, AND I HAD TO *RESCUE* HIM. AS *BAD* AS HE WAS, I JUST *COULDN'T* STAND BY AND LET HIM HURT HIMSELF.

WE THEN MARCHED ON THE INSTITUTE - WHERE MANY OF US ORIGINATED --

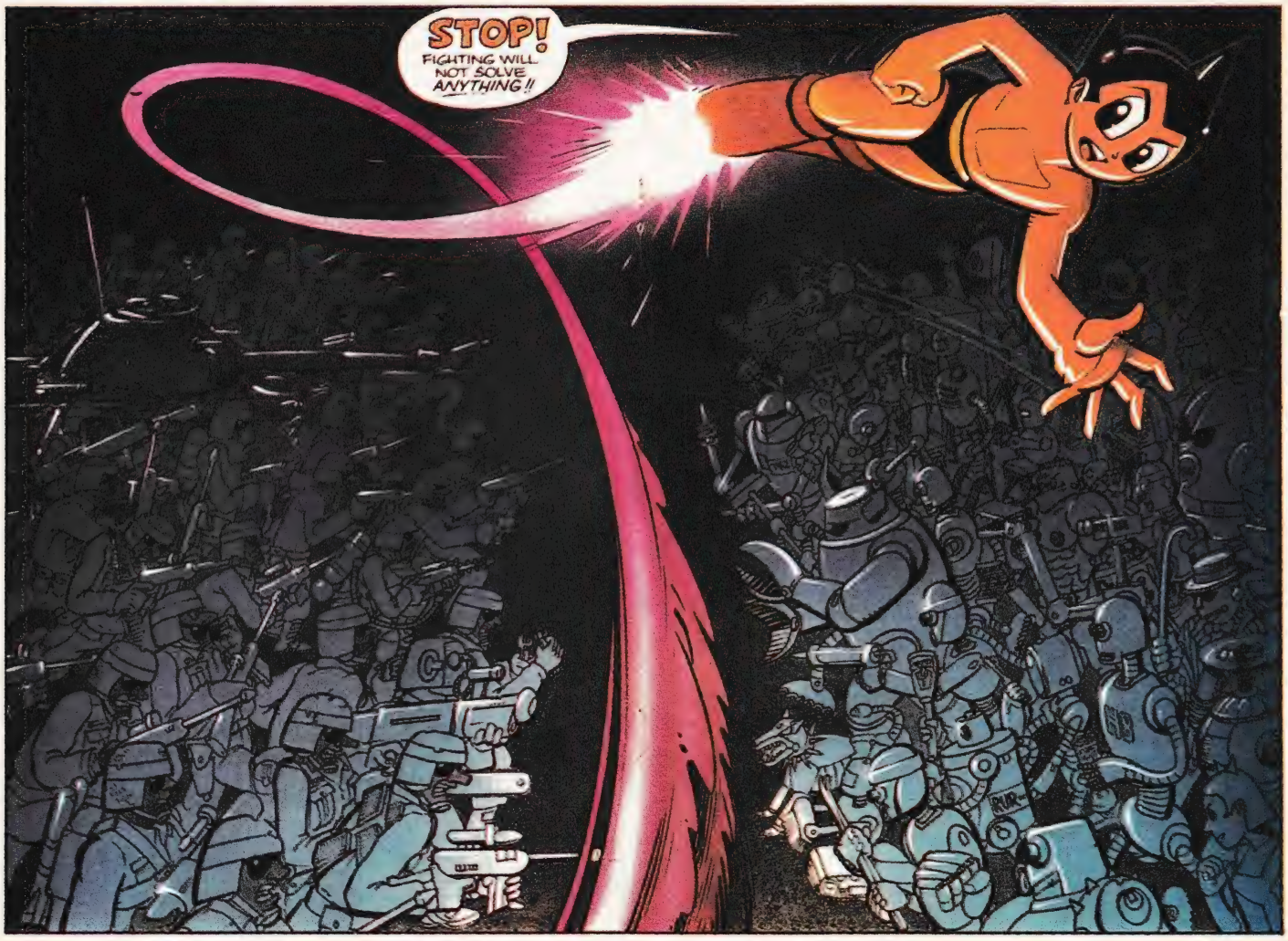
-- TO *DEMAND* OUR RIGHTS, BUT FOUND OUR WAY BLOCKED BY THE *MILITARY*.

DR. BOYNTON HAD, BY NOW, SUFFERED A TOTAL NERVOUS *BREAKDOWN*...

. . . AND HAD IMAGINED THAT HE HAD TO *ELIMINATE* ALL THE TROUBLE-SOME PEOPLE IN HIS LIFE, INCLUDING *ME!*

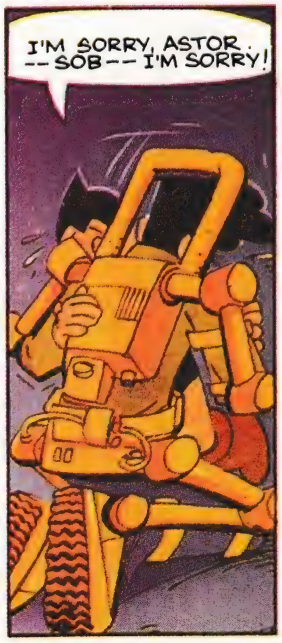
I TRIED TO NEG-OTIATE A SETTLE-MENT BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND THE ROBOTS, WHO BY THIS TIME WERE IN NO MOOD TO CHAT, AND ENDED UP HAVING TO *DISARM* BOTH SIDES BEFORE THEY WOULD LISTEN.

DR. BOYNTON APPEARED AND I *FINALLY* LEARNED HIS *DARK SECRET*. . .

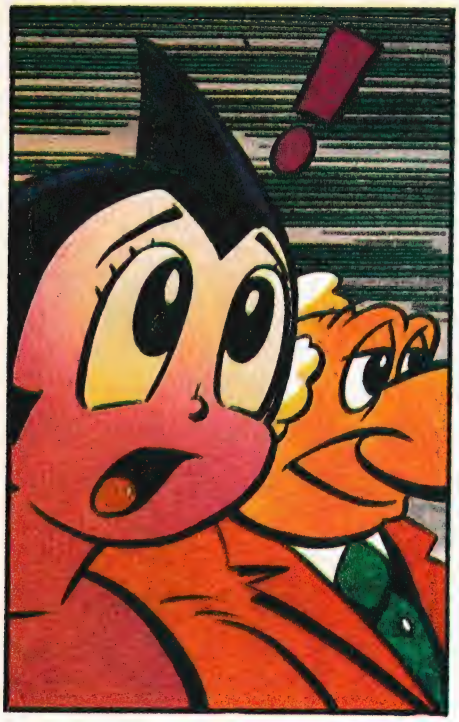


NOW I KNEW *WHY* I EXISTED. BOYNTON, CONSUMED BY GUILT AND GRIEF OVER THE TRAGIC LOSS OF HIS SON, HAD TRIED TO *RECREATE* HIM... AND I WAS THE RESULT. THOUGH HE WAS VERY CRUEL TO ME, I COULD NO LONGER HATE HIM...

HOPEFULLY HE WILL MAKE A FULL RECOVERY, AND RETURN TO HIS PLACE AS DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE.

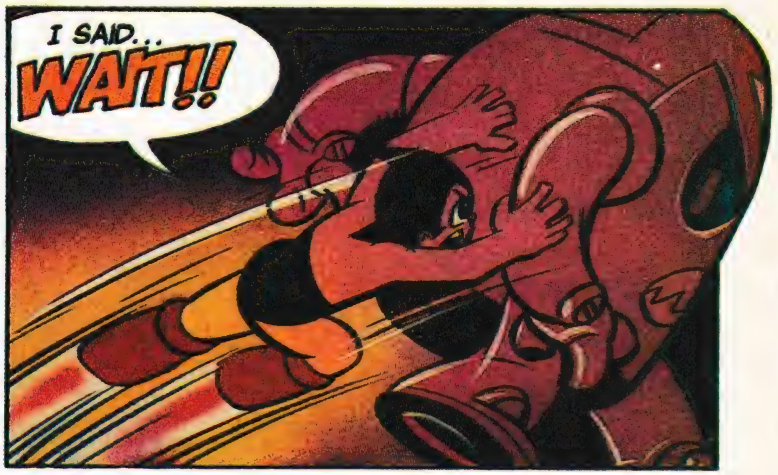


DR. ELEFUN APPEARED AND DEFUSED THE TENSE SITUATION...



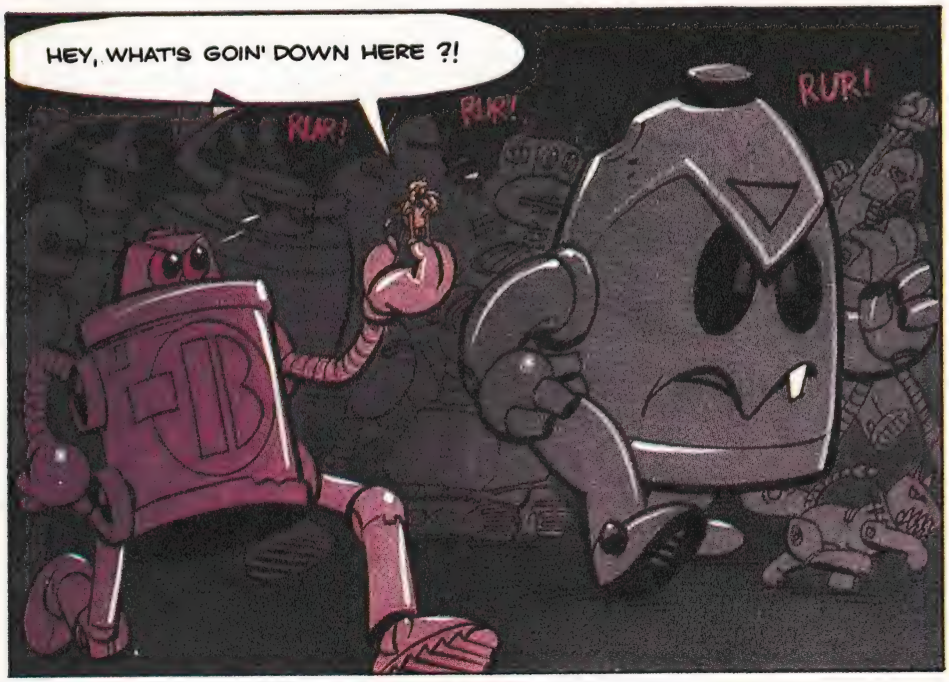
I WENT WITH DR. ELEFUN TO *CONFRONT* ALL THOSE WHO FELT THEY HAD A STAKE IN ME -- JUST TO SET THE RECORD *STRAIGHT*. ON THE WAY I SAVED A MAN FROM BEING *FLATTENED* BY A TON OF BRICKS, BUT ALL *HE* CARED ABOUT WAS HIS SILLY CAR, WHICH GOT TRASHED. THE POLICE COMPLETELY MISUNDERSTOOD THE SITUATION AND I WAS FORCED TO FLEE...

...BACK TO THE REMAINS OF THE ROBOCIRCUS WHERE THE 'BOTS WERE PLANNING ANOTHER INSURRECTION. I TRIED TO GET THEM TO WAIT...*ONE*, NAMED *BIGROB* -- TOOK A *LOT* OF CONVINCING...



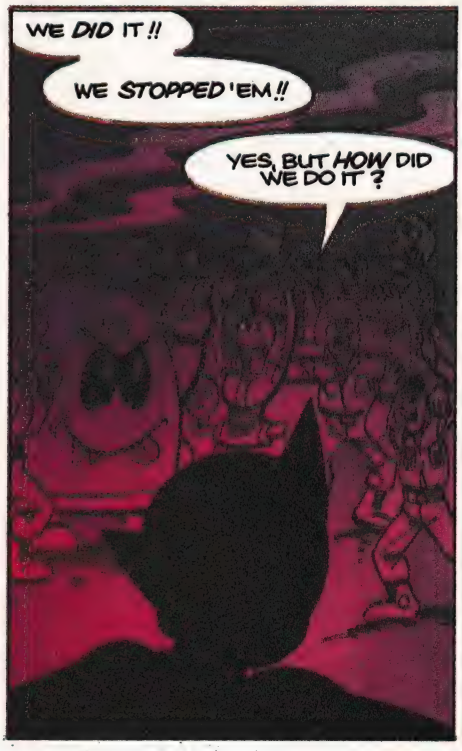
I HEADED BACK TO THE INSTITUTE TO PRESENT OUR DEMANDS AGAIN BUT SOMETHING WENT *WRONG* WITH MY GUIDANCE SYSTEM AND I *CRASHED*. WHEN I CAME TO, I DISCOVERED A ROGUE *CYBERSHARK* THREATENING PROF. PUENTY AND HIS PAL, SPUD...

...I TOOK CARE OF THE 'SHARK BUT FOUND THAT A WHOLE HERD OF THEM WERE *ATTACKING* THE *INSTITUTE* (WHY I DON'T KNOW, THOUGH I HAVE MY SUSPICIONS) THE *MILITARY*, THE *POLICE*, AND THE ANGRY *'BOTS* ARRIVED ON THE SCENE AT THE *SAME* TIME...



...AND, SEEING A COMMON THREAT, PITCHED IN AND STOPPED THE BERSERK BATTLE-ROBS IN THEIR TRACKS. SOON AFTER...

THERE'S HELPLESS 'BOTS IN THERE -- WE GOTTA STOP 'EM!
THERE'S IMPORTANT SCIENTISTS IN THERE -- WE GOTTA STOP 'EM!
THERE'S VALUABLE PROPERTY IN THERE -- WE GOTTA STOP 'EM!

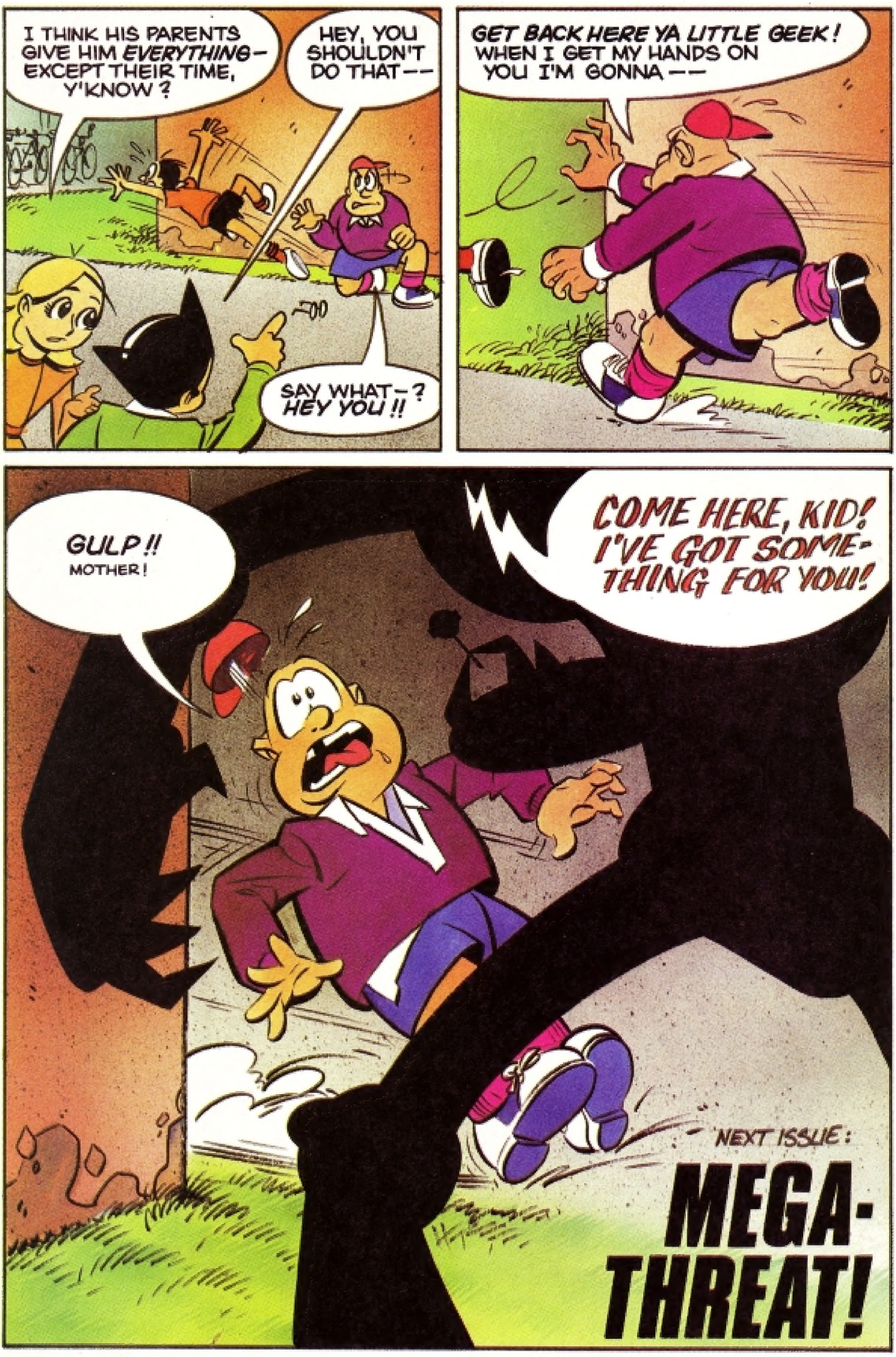

WE DID IT !!
WE STOPPED 'EM !!
YES, BUT HOW DID WE DO IT ?

BY CO-OPERATING IN THE FACE OF A COMMON ENEMY ! WE MUST CONTINUE THAT CO-OPERATION TO FIGHT THE ENEMY OF FEAR AND PREJUDICE ! WE CAN LIVE SIDE BY SIDE AS EQUALS !
YEAH,...
HE'S RIGHT,...
WE CAN DO IT,...
SURE,...

...THE ROBORIGHTS BILL HAD PASSED AND I MET MY NEW PARENTS!
WELCOME HOME, SON !
!?!

AND THAT'S WHY I'M HERE TODAY— I MAY KNOW A LOT OF FACTS AND FIGURES, BUT WHAT I *REALLY* WANT IS TO LEARN ABOUT BEING A *NORMAL BOY*... IS *THAT* TOO MUCH TO ASK ?
ASTRO, I THINK I SPEAK FOR ALL OF US... WE'VE ACTED IN HASTE. PLEASE DON'T THINK THE WORST OF US, WE SIMPLY WERE *AFRAID* OF SOMETHING WE DIDN'T *UNDERSTAND!*
OF COURSE. THANK YOU, SIR!
RIGHT, OFF TO CLASS MY BOY!
I'LL BE KEEPING AN EYE ON YOU, KID! ONE SLIP-UP AND *WHAM!!*— I'LL HAVE YOU RE-CALLED SO FAST IT'LL MAKE YOUR HEAD SPIN!
CLASS, YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE —! WE HAVE A NEW STUDENT WITH US TODAY, HIS NAME IS *ASTRO* AND HE'S--

A ROTTEN LITTLE ROBOT! MY DADDY SAYS THEY HAVE NO RIGHT——
THAT'S ENOUGH, ARCHIBALD. THIS CLASS IS NOT CONCERNED WITH YOUR DADDY'S *AHEM* OPINIONS! ASTRO, PLEASE TAKE YOUR SEAT.
NOW CLASS, PLEASE CALL UP SECTION E/27 IN YOUR COMPU-NOTES...
Don't pay attention to Archie! He's a creep! I think you're cute! Kris
LATER, AT RECESS...
H-HI...KRIS?
YEAH! KRISTAL KLEER! NEAT, HUH? WHAT'S YOUR LAST NAME?
I'M NOT SURE... I JUST USE ASTRO!
OW! OUCH! LEMME ALONE!!
WHEREZAT MILK MONEY, NERD?!
WHY IS ARCHIE SO ANGRY AND MEAN?


I THINK HIS PARENTS GIVE HIM *EVERYTHING* – EXCEPT THEIR TIME, Y'KNOW ?
HEY, YOU SHOULDN'T DO THAT – –
SAY WHAT – ? HEY YOU !!
GET BACK HERE YA LITTLE GEEK! WHEN I GET MY HANDS ON YOU I'M GONNA – –
GULP !! MOTHER !
COME HERE, KID! I'VE GOT SOME-THING FOR YOU!
NEXT ISSUE:
MEGA-THREAT!

ASTRO FANS!

Well it's official! As of issue #9, not only is Canadian Ken Steacy providing the breath-taking visuals on the monthly adventures of everyone's favorite 'bot — but he's also plotting and scripting these adventures too! When will it end? Where will it stop? With the aid of able-bodied Andrew Pratt, the Steacy storytelling machine is producing the finest work we've seen to date! Whenever a bundle of Astro Graphics arrives in the office, state law demands that no heavy equipment be operated, and that a bottle of smelling salts be kept near by. It's a lot of fuss — but worth the effort. And as if this weren't enough (And shouldn't it be?) those two canuckleheads went and whipped up a new logo! (See front cover.) Whew! Just talking about all those two do wears me out. While I take a snooze, let's see some reader letters.

To the editor:

You deserve a lot of praise for the return of Astro Boy and Speed Racer, but you should be criticized a lot for not bringing back Eighth Man, Gigantor (My personal favorite), Marine Boy, Kimba the White Lion, Princess Knight (Another personal favorite), Prince Planet, The G-Force, Cyborg Big X, and The Amazing Three. I wonder if anyone else gave you this kind of letter. I see, or rather read that everybody who buys your magazines welcomes Astro Boy and Speed Racer, and seems to snub out the other Japanese cartoons! Either that, or these people never saw or heard of them. Is it really necessary to leave them out, especially Eighth Man, Marine Boy, and Kimba? I would appreciate this if you would consider my letter, even more if you would print it. I figure this will get the other fans of Gigantor, Princess Knight, and the other Japanese cartoons to take note (since they have not already) and respond.

As I said, I and I'm sure other people besides myself would appreciate this.

Michael Leonard
Jersey City, NJ

Michael, Michael, Michael. Relax, okay? Take a few deep breaths and chill out. No one — I repeat no one is trying to snub you out. One out of every three letters we get to Astro Grams fondly mentions Marine Boy or Kimba.

True, many readers have never had the chance you've had, to see all those great cartoons — but most have. Try not to hold it against the ones who haven't. You were lucky to be in a viewing area where all those shows were telecast. I myself never saw Astro, Kimba, Marine Boy, or the others — but I did see Gigantor — and believe me Michael, if it were in my power, you would be holding a Gigantor comic in hands right at this moment. I'd give Ken Steacy's right arm to write a book like that. (I just loves giant robots!) But we're dealing with foreign copyrights that just aren't available at this time.

There are miles of red tape to be untangled. That's why you don't see them on television much these days. And if you do — you're not supposed to. NOW comics currently publishes the only two major Japanese characters licensed in the United States. With time and luck, perhaps we can do more in the future. For now — enjoy Speed and Astro and relax. 'Kay?

Dear Astro-nomers,

If you guys keep up the great work like you have, I'm going to run out of adjectives to describe how I feel about your comic. This issue (#8) was no exception. Another issue with a good story and beautiful art. It was nice to see a little of the origin of Astro and Boynton's wife. Mr. Steacy did a beautiful job on the faces of the people that Boyton was imagining that he was killing. The skull in the eye was funny, also. It looks as if Astro is finally going to leave Boynton and the Institute. It's about time. Well, that's all I wanted to say. I hope that the next 100 issues of Astro Boy are as good as the first eight.

Take care,
Galen S. West
Ridgecrest, CA

Well I hope so too, Galen. Ken's got up to issue eighty-five done so far, and so far, so good. What he does in the remaining fifteen issues is another matter. You be the judge. Look for issue #100 to hit the stands in the summer of 1996. Let me know what you think.

Dear Astro-people,

Thank you. Thank you for producing a comic book of exquisite quality in every respect. As one reader suggested, I too would be interested in posters or copies of the covers. Ken, the covers are fantastic! A lot of times the covers are ignored but I am glad to see such quality work here. Also Ken, how do you do those colors? They're incredible!

Great story. Great reading. Great art. Great. To be quite honest with you all, I had only perhaps heard the faintest rumor of the existence of this small boy/machine before your book. But, and I think you'll be glad to hear this, I'm hooked and it's your fault. I love this comic. It's one of my all-time favorites. Don't change anything as far as I'm concerned. Just keep up the great work. "The Original Astro Boy" is a prime example of how far comics have progressed and what can be done in this medium. In fact, it's not great; it's awesome, excellent, a classic in it's own time. Really! Keep 'em coming.

Kevin A. Dumont
Troy, NY

Thanks Kevin. Many others have wondered how Ken does those colors — so many, in fact, that Ken is going to be starting up a mail-order class on how to paint covers the Ken Steacy way. All you need is a set of colors, some white cardboard, plenty of paper towels, and a hydromatic Broadstone RA 6000 air brush connected to a General Dynamics "Li'l Bulldog" 50,000 PSI compressor — and you're set! More details on this class, as they're made available.

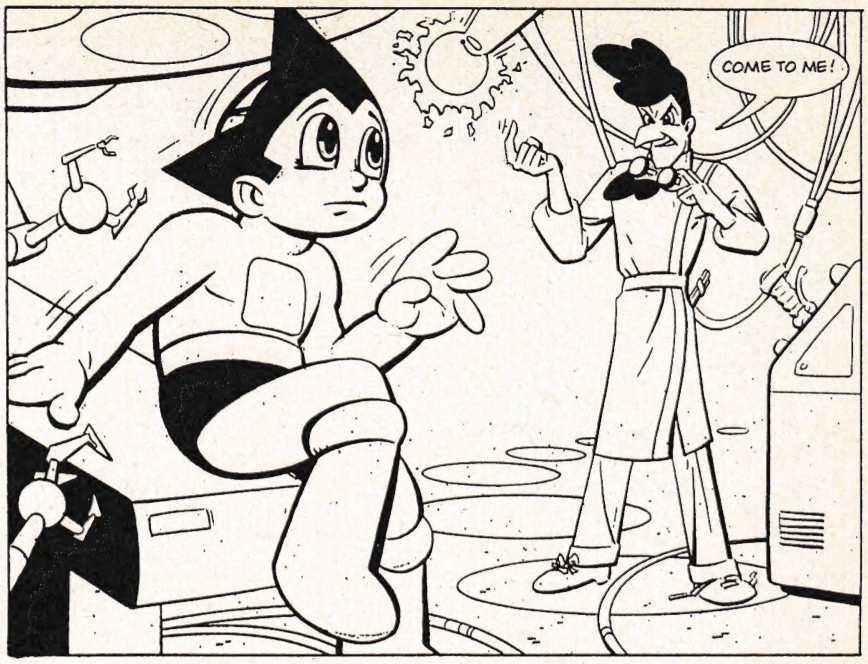
Dear Editor,

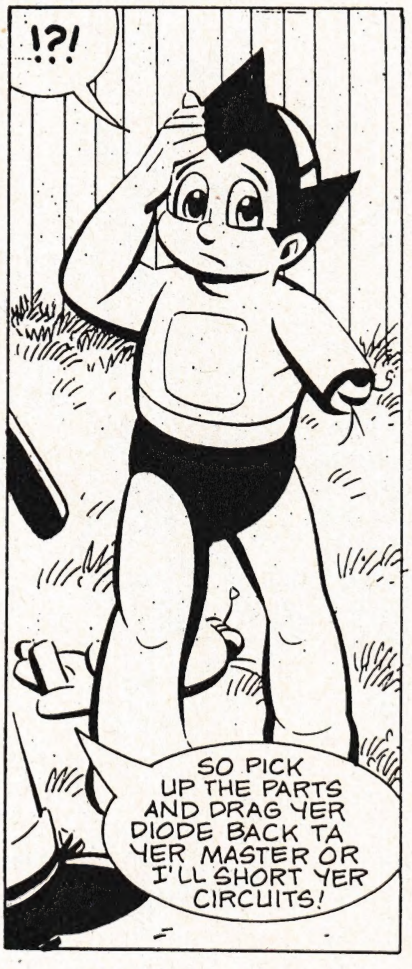
What an awesome eighth issue of Astro Boy! Everything about it was top class stuff. I especially loved the cool splash page with Astro trying to stop the Army and the robots from clobbering each other. It should be made up as a poster, and I mean a big one.

I'm happy he (Astro) has finally found people he can trust. I look forward to all the new escapades of this heroic robot who is more human than anyone we'll ever know. Thanks again.

Steven Acevedo
Bronx, NY

What's this?!? Astro Boy is in the Ice Capades? Holy Smokes! Someone had better warn Dorothy Hammil! I hope his jets don't melt the ice! I hope he doesn't go nutso and beat up all the Muppets and the Smurfs! Gosh — what a thought!



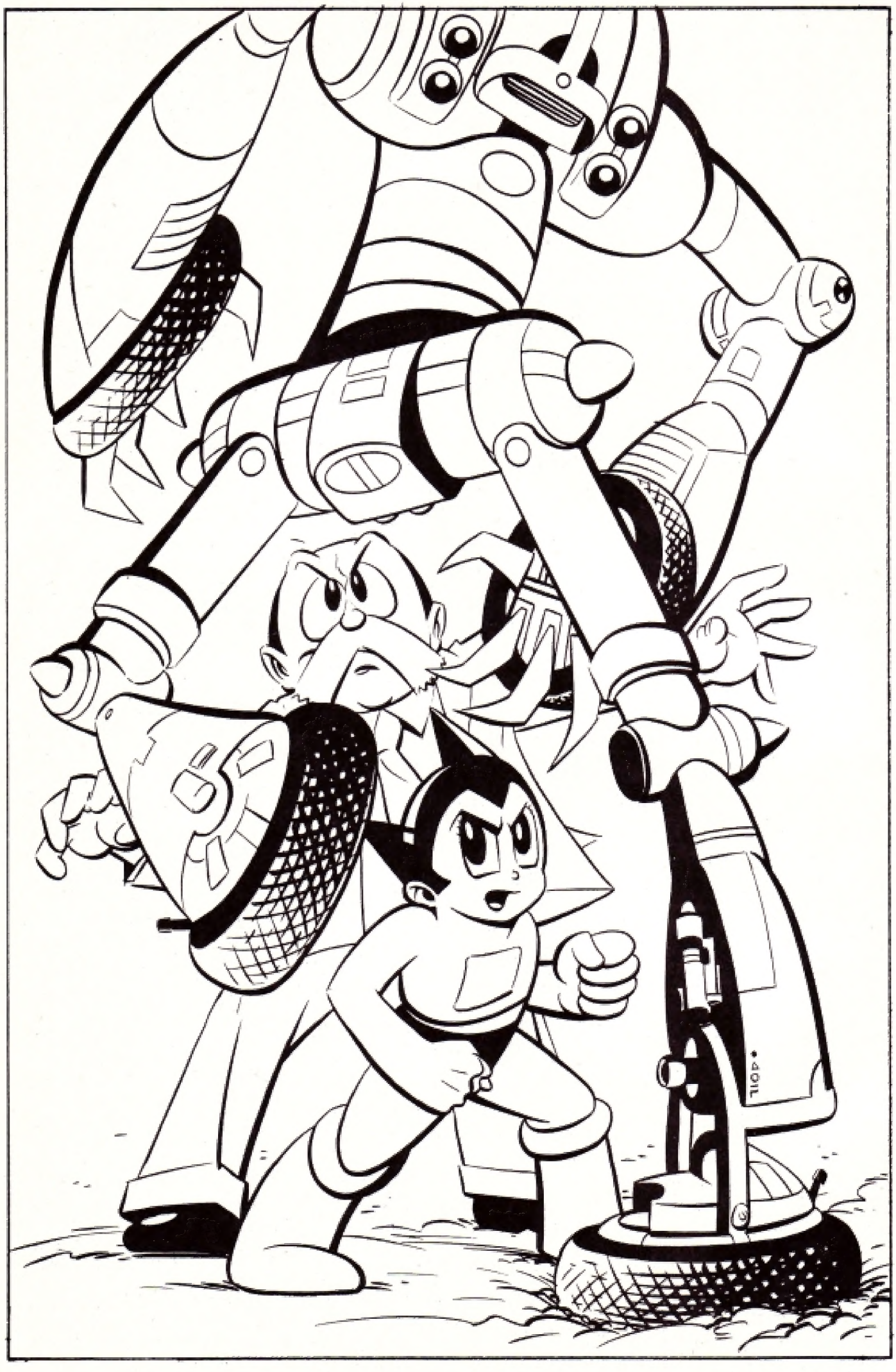


Dear Astro Grams,

I've got it! Really! Listen up to the new, official Astro Boy fan club theme song. Ready? You sing it like "Oh Canada." Here we go....

OH ASTRO BOY... YOU'RE QUITE A LITTLE 'BOT... YOU WISH THAT YOU WERE HUMAN, BUT WE SEE THAT YOU ARE NOT... YOU WISH THAT YOU COULD GO SWIMMING, BUT YOU'D RUST UP ON THE SPOT... AND SINK TO THE BOTTOM OF THE POOL, JUST LIKE A ROCK....

Woah! I would really have liked to printed more of the above letter, but right in the middle of it, the GTP (Good Taste Police) burst in, ripped it out of my hands, and burned it to a crisp. Wow. What a loss, eh?

Well that's it for this issue. Be here next time when Astro fights some really nasty guys, gets into heaps of trouble, and makes the world safe for organized Yatzee tournaments. Be there, or be Cher.

HEY KIDS! COLOR ASTRO